

What is Alchemical Gnosis?

Before we begin our discussion of Alchemical Gnosis, it's probably a good idea to define Gnosis. Webster's defines Gnosis as "Knowledge; Knowledge of Spiritual things; Mystical Knowledge." It goes on to define a Gnostic as; "a member of any of certain sects among the early Christians who claimed to have superior knowledge of spiritual things, and explained the world as created by powers or agencies arising as emanations from the Godhead."

In the early Gnostic Christian meetings there were no priest or leaders. Each individual was seen as a representative of the Divine. Therefore at each meeting lots would be drawn to assign the duties of the different offices thereby overtime giving each member a turn to speak, and hear the word as expressed through that particular person. The early Gnostic Christians accepted as literal fact that the God of Abraham had no name, he resided in no one place, but was everywhere and everything. For this reason there was no need for priest, gurus, or leaders. The ultimate priest and leader, that of the Godhead itself was seen to reside within the hearts of all persons. Each individual then was capable of achieving his own experience of the Divine reality, or his own Gnosis; traveling the "Path of Return" did this.

There are those who will argue that the placing of emphasis on personal Gnosis will lead only to anarchy. God after all is not a subjective state of mind. How can so many divergent personal truths be considered to represent the singular truth that is God? They will argue that there must be an organized structure pointing to one central personality who would claim to intercede with God on your behalf. Yet in their next breath they will extol the omnipotence of the Lord and tell you that should it be his Will, even the rocks would speak to give testimony unto his name. Do not let these wolves in shepherd's clothing steal your birthright. The God-of-your-heart will speak to you if you would just be still and listen.

The "Hermetic Science" teaches that all matter or energy in the universe, including human beings, are made of, and move through, the being of God. The being of God is his consciousness. To the Hermetic Scientist the entire universe is the result of God's mental processes or consciousness. It states that in fact we humans, our minds, are eternal individualized expressions of the Divine Will. It is this fact that the alchemist strives to bring into conscious realization, and use throughout his daily life.

The fact that Gnosis is possible at all is because it is built on the fundamental spiritual law that all things are interrelated, and connected. Leonardo da Vinci affirmed this law when he said he could understand any problem in the natural world. In truth the processes of achieving Gnosis is so inherent in our nature, that its miracle goes unseen day after day. This is especially true when we experience new understanding and are able to express solutions that are distinctly unique. In its most simplistic form Gnosis is the five-step process of:

1. Focused Attention
2. Subconscious Deduction
3. Creative Imagination
4. Reason

5. Intuition

Knowledge is the foundation upon which the house of wisdom is built. Knowledge can only be acquired via practical study and experimentation. Wisdom on the other hand is delved out by the good auspices of Divine Providence. Though the source of the two seems different, nonetheless they go hand in hand.

I am sure that some will argue that if one is seeking divine revelation, enlightenment or whatever, that ardent prayer alone will suffice. If this is what they chose to believe, then so be it. But all the philosophers admonish us to read, pray, work and read again.

The first step in the process of Gnosis is to fix our attention on the subject matter at hand. This does not mean just looking at it, but actually finding out all that we can about it. This is a combined effort of reading and observation.

All of this focused self-conscious attention imprints itself onto the matter of our subconscious. In subconscious the information gathered during conscious analysis goes through a deductive reasoning process.

The outcome of deductive reasoning gives birth to our creative imagination process. This creative imagination is the response of subconscious to self-consciousness in the generation of mental images. Our creative imagination then is nothing more than an extrapolative arrangement, of the parts discerned during analysis, as it relates to the whole picture

It is not enough to just let our mind follow any train of thought that we fancy. The information received from inner prompting must also be analyzed and held up to the light of experience and verification. Especially in the beginning since our minds color our perceptions and intuitive promptings. The process of reasoning actually reinstates the above process, or creates a loop, in which steps 1, 2 and 3 are repeated.

During this process some remarkable things begin to occur. Of course the most prominent thing is that you understand the subject matter better. But then you begin to find yourself intuitively understanding the deeper intricacies of the subject. You are able to make correlations between units of data not readily seen by the cursory observer. It is this very method of Gnosis that George Washington Carver used when he locked himself in his laboratory and asked God to show him everything about the peanut. It is also the method used to make the plant stone a.k.a. the Minor Opus in alchemy.

The Western Mysteries do not promise to give you anything that you do not already possess. Rather it strives to make you aware of the latent potentialities within you. It gives you a safe methodology in which to develop these latent powers. The modern mind-set sees the process of Gnosis as being the outcome of individual effort, and that the solutions received as being self created. The Western Initiate sees the act of Gnosis as an interactive dialogue between nature and himself. He sees the origin of his knowledge coming from an inward and upward source. Ultimately it comes down to us asking, and God answering.

Does this sound absurd to you? Well it should not. Whether you are trying to fathom how to split the atom or understand a point of philosophy, a discourse and supplication to the Divine is being engaged in. By repeatedly bringing forward into consciousness all you know about the matter

you are working with, eventually a connection between your consciousness and the matter is made. The intuitive voice of the Divine speaks, and the mind is filled with an image of that which is desired to be made manifest. This image imparts immediate understanding of what is seen, and knowledge of how to make it manifest on the material plane.

The Western Initiate knows that what he terms his individual memory is just one of many bays or inlets of memory that make up the vast store of universal knowledge. He realizes that just as he can access his own memories, he too, has access to information stored within the universal memory.

In the initiatory practice of the Western Inner Tradition application of the spiritual laws governing Gnosis have been refined to a science. Each request of the heart, every desire is known to have a specific vibratory rate. On the Path of Return, as practiced in the Western Mysteries, there are 7 recurring stages of spiritual unfoldment one goes through as the seeker treads the 22 paths and faces the 10 emanations of the Divine. But before this can be done there is some preliminary work that needs to be done on the psyche and the body.

We now know what Gnosis is, and have an understanding of the lawful spiritual basis upon which it operates. But just what is Alchemical Gnosis? Just as our Brothers and Sisters in the East, Western Adepts have devised a set of disciplined practices and meditations designed to draw the seeker of truth ever inward and upward. Even though this system of initiation is tailored to the Western way of life and mind-set, make no mistake about it the mental discipline is just as effective as Eastern exercises designed to bring about the inner spiritual regeneration of man and enhancement of his senses.

Unlike the methods of the East where the aspirant is called away from society to study under a Guru in monastic like solitude; Alchemical Gnosis is designed with the expectations that the aspirant will be holding down a regular job and have the pressures of family life to deal with. Its daily practice consists of two brief meditation periods per day.

Paralleling the shamanistic vision quest of indigenous peoples of North and South America, the Western Initiate makes use of the spiritual connections between terrestrial and celestial objects, especially between plants and the planets. The herbal preparations used in Alchemical Gnosis do not contain psychoactive compounds that work through the chemistry of the body to bring about interior sight. Yet these herbal preparations do allow the user to safely and consciously enter the spirit world, and experience its reality and share in its knowledge.

Instead of relying on outer chemistry, *alchemical Medicines of the Soul* rely on the formative forces of Nature, which are continually weaving about and within us, energetic fields of moldable light. These formative forces are not the mere creations of idle fancy. These forces have demonstrable and predictable properties, and the validity of their existence can be proven to all but the most closed-minded of skeptics.

Western Adepts long ago realized that if they could capture and retain in their herbal preparations the etheric energies produced by certain astrological events they would be able to create a delivery device for these forces into the human body. This would enable them to use this energy whenever it was needed. In effect they realized that when used with conscious intent these products would help to catalyze the aspirant's spiritual progress.

The vision quest products of Western Adepts work on the spiritual energy centers of the human body stimulating their development. Instead of throwing the aspirant into the sometimes life-threatening explosion of hallucinogenic illumination, alchemical medicines of the soul set up a nocturnal astral dialogue between the seeker and their Inner Master.

Alchemical Gnosis is the process of using Alchemical Medicines of the Soul with conscious intent, within the paradigm of Hermetic philosophy, with the goal of stimulating the development of the human body's spiritual energy centers, in order to establish knowledge of, and communication with, your Inner Master.

The obvious question about all the above is how one is to instigate this rapport with their inner master. The process is an extremely personal one; though my own experiences have been confirmed by similar experiences of other persons who have undergone the preliminary stages of the process. This commune with the Inner Master is a direct result of the hermetic meditations done during the day. Initially the contact is made at night via dreams. As was mentioned before most of us have not developed our spiritual senses enough to perceive these things. That is not to say that the spirit of God does not speak continually to us through out the day. It is just that the rational mind and the indoctrination of society is in the way of us perceiving this truth. So initially the contact is made at night when we are, for all intents and purposes, *still and able to hear the voice of the divine.*

When my initial contact with my Inner master first started it seemed to be just wishful thinking or dreaming. At that time my most ardent desire was to be instructed by a teacher. But as my dreams continued and became more lucid and vivid it became apparent that some sort of nocturnal astral erudition was going on. In the beginning the dreams were only in symbols but as time went on I actually received spoken instruction.

The ultimate goal of this practice is to develop your inner senses to a point where you are able to use them in a conscious state. I do not want to give the impression that these exercises are meant to cause lucid dreaming, they are not. During the meditation periods the student performs certain mental exercises designed to heighten the perception of whatever sense he happens to be working on. By using the normal, daily regenerative processes of the body the initiates construct themselves a being capable of spiritual perception.

Because of the degree of subtlety of the causal and creative worlds, most people are not able to perceive or use consciously the spiritual forces operating in these spheres. Nonetheless the fact remains that the process for the regeneration of the human being is a response of our so-called personal consciousness to an impetus received from these higher levels. The final phase of this regenerative work requires the conscious mind of man assisting nature. As one progresses with the conscious assistance or rebuilding their body, his first contact with the inner master, which he is able to carry back with him into the material world, happens in the medium of the astral plane. After continued practice the student will be able to establish conscious connection via meditative state and perceive consciously through his spiritual senses as he does through his physical senses.

Please note, for me the information the Inner Master needed to pass on concerned the actual procedures used in alchemical laboratory work because that was, and is, my passion. Had my passion been driven to express itself in another manner, say painting, writing, music, or

medicine, the information would have been relevant to the task.

The very first contact that I had came within two weeks of my starting to use the Base 7 herbal extracts I had made in a ritualized manner. The dream went as follows:

I am walking along a barren shoreline. The color of the sand is an intense golden brown, the air is hot and thin, and it is hard to breathe here. Above me the sun shines down relentlessly from a cloudless sky. After sometime of walking another shoreline appears in the distance. I can hear the rhythmic sound of the surf. Near the water I can see a vale of mist hovering in the air. It looks cool and inviting. In a moment I am transported to the waters edge, the waves lap coolly at my toes. There is an old sailboat beside me with a solid black flag hanging from the mast. I climbed into the boat and immediately find myself in the middle of a dead calm sea; there is no landfall to be seen. I look up into the sky and notice that clouds are gathering. Soon the sun is hidden behind thick, dark clouds. The wind has picked up and the black flag atop the mast is flapping madly in the wind and sounding like a whip. Waves now are surging all around the boat and it is being tossed from side to side. I am definitely afraid; I grab a hold of the mast and begin to pray. Suddenly the sky and sea go calm. The air is filled with puffy brilliant white snowflakes. The flag atop the mast has turned white. I am not cold in this snow. The boat now sails itself to an island. Upon my arrival at the island shore I can see vegetation that is a luxuriant green and a white sandy beach. The snow still falls over the water. In fact the water is now full of the snow. There is a building up the embankment, I walk up to it and go into the school.

Another particularly vivid dream that I had went as follows:

I am floating in a very long hallway with large glass windows, the architecture makes me think of Versailles. The hallway begins to be filled with a mist as I am drawn down it; the mist in fact is changing colors ranging from mauve, violet, blue and pink. I remember feeling how strange it felt to be moving my body by thought and not my legs. Before me a large door appears; there are ornate gold carvings on the door, the door itself seems to be made of ivory or pearl. The two large doors swing inward and suddenly the mist sets me down and disappears. I find myself in the middle of a vast library, with rows upon tiered rows of books and winding staircases. Somehow I know this library is infinite and every thought, deed, or whatever that took place within the universe is contained within it. I find myself floating up a central staircase that reaches up into a ceiling covered by clouds. On top of the staircase is a platform and in the center is what looks to be a lectern. There are desk and books everywhere yet all is in order. I look at the lectern again and to my amazement I see Frater Albertus. He puts a large book on the lectern and opens it. The pages of the book are a brilliant white, yet they are empty. Frater is pointing to different spots on the pages and speaking. One part of me knows there is information there and can hear the words he speaks yet they are unintelligible and intelligible at the same time. Then clear as a bell I hear Frater say "are you a good Hermetic Scientist" I wanted to say yes, but I knew I had not been keeping up with my studies or living the life "I believed" a Hermetic Scientist should lead. I could feel fear creep into my heart and mind as I thought if I answer truthfully he would stop teaching me. To my amazement I

answered him truthfully and began explaining why I thought I was not a good Hermetic Scientist, why I was not worthy. Before I could finish my first sentence Frater slammed the book closed and I felt my self-falling back into my body.

A week latter I had the Red Mercury of the "Minor Opus". It became evident to me then that what I thought made a "good hermeticist" and what God judged us on were two different things.

Another dream that came after many years of practice in the plant kingdom, and just after completing and using some of the red powder of projection from the Opus Minor went as follows.

I was in my laboratory and watching a soxhlet extractor work on trying to extract the essence out of some mineral. No matter how many times the reflux chamber filled and drained, no color change could be seen in the solvent. I then heard a voice giving me specific instructions. At first actually there was a thermometer which I saw getting pushed down in the matter in the soxhlet chamber. The matter had become gluey or waxy in consistency. Yet the solvent had turned a deep red. As the thermometer pushed harder down on the matter more blood red tincture welled up out of it in copious amounts.

Everyone here has to accomplish certain task and learn specific lessons. What exactly these lessons and task are; only to your Inner Master knows. Every person on the planet is an alchemist in the sense that he or she is striving to bring into full realization those things, which the Inner Master prompts them to perform.

It should be apparent by now that Medicines of The Soul can be used to help all persons achieve the quest set before them by their Inner Master. These specially prepared alchemical substances help facilitate your inner journey. They will not do the work for you. Many people are offering quick fix and instantaneous results in this or that new method. As legions that have gone before you have experienced, their effectiveness leaves just as instantly. Alchemy is a life process and life takes time to bloom to perfection. Even a child prodigy that amazes everyone with whatever spectacular gift they posses must practice and work to hone and refine that which is latent within them. Even the instantaneous miracle of alchemical transmutation has behind it years of labor and experiment necessary to attain the final event.

Chapter Summary on Gnosis

1. Gnosis means knowledge or interior knowing a.k.a. intuition. The early Gnostic's claimed that this faculty could be increased on contemplating the emanations of the Godhead.
2. Gnosis is a natural, everyday experience for us all. We use it to help us gain understanding of all new subject matter.
3. Gnosis is a five-step process of; focused attention, subconscious deduction, creative imagination, reason, and intuition.

4. Gnosis relies on the spiritual truth that all creation is interrelated. Just as we have access to our individual memories, we also have access to knowledge stored in the universal ocean of memory.
5. Alchemical Gnosis is the process of using Alchemical Medicines of the Soul with conscious intent, within the paradigm of Hermetic philosophy, with the goal of stimulating the development of the human body's spiritual energy centers, in order to establish knowledge of and communication with your Inner Master.
6. Contact with the Inner Master is done at night via initiatic dreams.

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